

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated January 22, 2008. Claims 1-7 and 10 are presented for examination, of which Claims 1, 7 and 10 are independent form. Claims 1-3, 7 and 10 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicant regards as his invention. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Claim 1, 7 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0105849 (Iwamoto et al.), assigned in common with the present application (see the PTO assignment records at reel/frame 12673/925).

Claims 1, 6, 7 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,938,154 (Berson et al.) in view of “PC ID Declaration Section Part Authentication Through Inherent Numbers and Authentication Circuits” (Hiroki Eda et al.); Claim 2, as being unpatentable over *Berson* in view of *Hiroki Eda*, U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0163730 (Roskind et al.) and U.S. Patent 7,117,493 (Matsushima); Claims 3 and 4, as being unpatentable over *Berson* in view of *Hiroki Eda, Roskind, Matsushima* and U.S. Patent 7,158,657 (Okazaki et al.); and Claim 5, as being unpatentable over *Berson* in view of *Hiroki Eda, Matsushima, Okazaki and Roskind*.

As shown above, Applicant has amended independent Claims 1, 7 and 10 in terms that more clearly define what he regards as his invention. Applicant submits that these amended independent claims, together with the remaining claims dependent thereon, are patentably distinct from the cited prior art for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 is directed to an authentication method of an image processing system in which a host computer, an authentication apparatus and an image processing apparatus are

connected to a network. In a first request step, at the host computer, the image processing apparatus is requested to effect authentication when the host computer remotely operates the image processing apparatus. A transmission step is performed, in which, at the image processing apparatus, data specifying the authentication apparatus to perform an authentication process on an operation level of the remote operation is transmitted to the host computer in a case where the host computer is authenticated in response to the request in the first request step. In a second request step, at the host computer, a request for the authentication process is issued to the authentication apparatus based on the data transmitted in the transmission step, and in an authentication step, at the authentication apparatus, the authentication process is performed in response to the request in the second request step. A remote operation step is performed at the host computer, in which the image processing apparatus is remotely operated in accordance with the operation level authenticated in the authentication step.

Among other notable features of the method of Claim 1 are that, when a host computer remotely operates an image processing apparatus, the image processing apparatus transmits data for specifying an authentication apparatus to perform an authentication process on an operation level of remote operation, to the host computer, and in response to an authentication request from the host computer, the authentication apparatus performs the authentication process, and the host computer remotely operates the image processing apparatus in accordance with the operation level. These features are supported by Figs. 1 and 15 and the corresponding portions of the specification.^{1/}

^{1/} It is of course to be understood that the claim scope is not limited by the details of this or any other particular embodiment that may be referred to.

According to the method of Claim 1, an image processing apparatus need only transmit data for specifying an authentication apparatus to a host computer, and need not itself execute an authentication process on an operation level of remote operation performed by the host computer.

Iwamoto relates to a system that controls access to a networked peripheral device by a walk-up user, which can also be accessed by a remote user, based on centralized access management information. Authenticated information for the walk-up user is received from the networked peripheral device at a centralized location, and, based on access-management information received by the peripheral, a determination is made at the latter device as to what level of access to the peripheral device is permitted to the walk-up user. The portions of *Iwamoto* specifically cited in the Office Action describe this process in greater detail.

Thus, in the *Iwamoto* system, authentication is performed at the peripheral device itself. Applicant submits that nothing in the mentioned (or any other) portions of *Iwamoto* would teach or suggest a method or apparatus which sends information specifying an authentication apparatus, as in the first request step of Claim 1. For at least this reason, Claim 1 is believed to be allowable over *Iwamoto*.

Berson relates to a network device that authenticates a network user, and permits remote operations from the network user in accordance with a result of authentication. In more detail, the *Berson* system is a network communication system for secure identification, including a network device, such as a printer, copier, scanner or a facsimile machine, and a network user having an assigned digital certificate. When the network user sends to the network device a command for operation of the network device and the user's digital certificate, the network

device authenticates the digital certificate of the user, and performs the requested operation if the network user is authenticated. Applicant submits, however, that *Berson* merely discloses that the network device authenticates the network user, which requests an operation to the network device.

Hiroki Eda relates to a system in which a user PC transmits a user ID and password to a server. The server authenticates the user PC based on the user ID and password, and transmits an agent to the user PC if the authentication is acknowledged. The user PC calculates a hash value from a unique number of the user PC and cession ID using the agent to transmit the hash value to the server. The server verifies the hash value, and transmits the content of sever to the user PC if the hash value is correct. In effect, however, this merely amounts to the server, which is remotely operated by the user PC, authenticating the user PC, the same in substance as in the *Berson* system.

Therefore, *Berson* and *Hiroki Eda* merely disclose the issuing of a request like that in the first request step of Claim 1, and do not disclose the other mentioned features of that claim, which accordingly is believed to be allowable over those two documents, taken singly or in any possible combination.

Independent Claims 7 and 10 are system and computer recording medium claims, respectively, corresponding to method Claim 1, and are believed to be patentable the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 1.

A review of the other art of record, including *Roskind*, *Matsushima* and *Okazaki*, has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicant's opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as references against the independent claims herein.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from Claim 1, and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

/Leonard P Diana/
Leonard P. Diana
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No.: 29,296

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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